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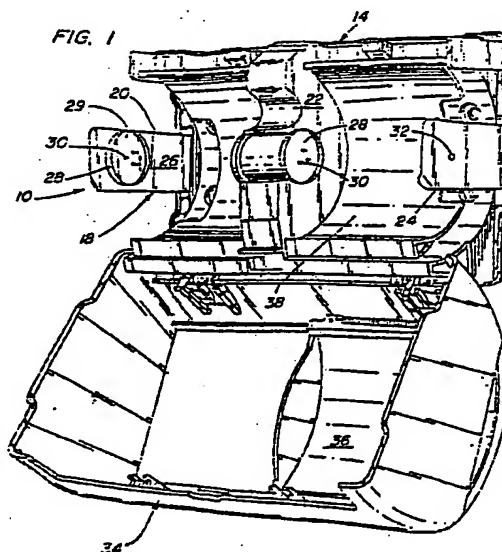
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(54) System and method of dispensing coreless rolls of paper products

(57) A system and method of installing a coreless roll (12) of an absorbent consumer paper product in a dispenser (10) performs or includes steps of orienting the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser, and securing the coreless roll to the dispenser by penetrating the coreless roll with at least one projection (30) that penetrates between adjacent layers of paper product in the coreless roll so that the coreless roll is secured against radial displacement with respect to the dispenser during operation. A temporary holding mechanism (38) may be provided to hold the coreless roll in an intended position of alignment while the coreless roll is being secured to the dispenser.



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Description

This invention pertains to the field of commercial and consumer absorbent paper products, which includes toilet tissue and paper towels. More specifically, this invention relates to an improved dispenser and method of dispensing a coreless roll of absorbent paper product.

Commercial and consumer absorbent paper products such as toilet tissue and paper towels are typically distributed and dispensed in roll form, and nearly always include a hollow cylindrical core that the product is wrapped about. The core is usually some type of cardboard, which is glued together and to the product so that the core stays intact and the product does not separate from the core. The product is then dispensed by mounting the roll on a spindle, such as can be found on the ubiquitous bathroom toilet roll dispenser, that passes through or otherwise penetrates the inner space of the core. Some dispensers include pegs that penetrate the hollow space within the core for only a limited extent, as demonstrated in U.S. Patents 390,084 and 2,905,404 to Lane and Simmons, respectively.

Recently, coreless rolls of toilet tissue have appeared on the market, primarily in Europe, that are wound throughout the entire diameter of the roll. There are advantages and disadvantages associated with the coreless rolls. Coreless rolls are ecologically superior to cored rolls because less adhesives are used to make the product. In addition, more product can be provided in the space that would otherwise have been occupied by the core. Cored rolls are more expensive to manufacture than coreless rolls because of the expense of making the cores and joining the cores to the product. In addition, coreless rolls have the advantage of being less subject to pilferage in commercial locations because of their inherent incompatibility with conventional dispensers.

On the other hand, there are dispensing problems with coreless rolls that have so far been difficult to overcome. Conventional dispensers for coreless rolls typically include an enclosed support surface that the roll is supported on as it turns, and an opening through which the product is passed. While functional, these dispensers have some undesirable characteristics, including an inability to control drag resistance to withdrawal of the product; the fact that the product actually touches the inside of the dispenser, which might be considered unsanitary by some consumers; and an inability to provide 180 degree product access to the consumer. It is clear that a need exists for an improved system and method for dispensing coreless rolls of absorbent consumer and commercial paper products.

Accordingly, it is an object of the invention to provide an improved system and method for dispensing coreless rolls of absorbent consumer and commercial paper products.

In order to achieve the above and other objects of the invention, an assembly for dispensing a coreless roll

of an absorbent consumer paper product such as toilet tissue includes, according to a first aspect of the invention, a frame; a mounting mechanism for permitting the frame to be mounted to a stationary surface such as a wall; and a coreless roll securing mechanism for securing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product for rotation within the frame, the coreless roll securing means comprising at least one projection that is constructed and arranged to penetrate into the coreless roll between adjacent layers of the coreless roll so as to prevent radial displacement of the coreless roll with respect to the frame during use, whereby an ecologically responsible coreless roll of absorbent paper product can be dispensed without fear of radial displacement as confidently as a conventional cored roll of product can be.

According to a second aspect of the invention, a method of installing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product in a dispenser, includes steps of (a)

orienting the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser; and (b) securing the coreless roll to the dispenser by penetrating the coreless roll with at least one projection that penetrates between adjacent layers of paper product in the coreless roll, whereby the coreless roll is secured against radial displacement with respect to the dispenser during operation.

According to third aspect of the invention, a method of installing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product in a dispenser includes steps of (a) placing the coreless roll in the dispenser on a temporary holding mechanism that will orient the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser; (b) securing the coreless roll to the dispenser so that the coreless roll will be mounted to rotate with respect to the dispenser; and (c) withdrawing the temporary holding mechanism away from the coreless roll, whereby the coreless roll will be permitted to rotate without being impeded by the temporary holding mechanism.

Finally, according to a fourth aspect of the invention, an assembly for dispensing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product includes a temporary holding mechanism for orienting the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser; a securing mechanism for securing the coreless roll to the dispenser so that the coreless roll will be mounted to rotate with respect to the dispenser; and a release mechanism for withdrawing the temporary holding mechanism away from the coreless roll after the coreless roll has been secured by the securing mechanism, whereby the coreless roll will be permitted to rotate without being impeded by the temporary holding mechanism.

By way of example only, specific embodiments of the present invention will now be described, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

FIGURE 1 is a perspective view of an assembly for dispensing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product that is constructed according to a first preferred embodiment of the invention, shown in an open position;

FIGURE 2 is a cross sectional view depicting the assembly shown in FIGURE 1 in an open position; FIGURE 3 is a cross sectional view of the assembly depicted in FIGURES 1 and 2, shown in a closed position;

FIGURE 4 is a perspective view of the assembly depicted in FIGURES 1-3, shown in a closed position;

FIGURE 5 is a perspective view of an assembly for dispensing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product that is constructed according to a second preferred embodiment of the invention; FIGURE 6 is a cross sectional view of a portion of the assembly shown in FIGURE 5; and

FIGURE 7 is a fragmentary cross sectional view through a portion of the assembly shown in FIGURES 5 and 6.

Referring now to the drawings, wherein like reference numerals designate corresponding structure throughout the views, and referring in particular to FIGURES 1-4, an assembly 10 for dispensing a coreless roll 12 of an absorbent consumer paper product such as toilet tissue includes a frame 14 that has a mounting hole 16 defined therein for permitting the frame to be mounted to a stationary surface, such as a wall. Assembly 10 further includes a coreless roll securing mechanism 18 for securing a coreless roll 12 of toilet tissue for rotation within the frame 14. In the embodiment shown in FIGURES 1-4, coreless roll securing mechanism 18 includes a first arm 20, a second, central arm 22 and a third arm 24 as may best be seen in FIGURE 1. The assembly 10 depicted in FIGURES 1-4 is designed to accommodate two rolls of coreless toilet tissue, much in the manner of many conventional dispensers that are available for commercial application. The outer arms 20, 24 are constructed out of a resilient material, such as spring steel, and are configured so they will be slightly displaced when a coreless roll is secured between the central arm 22 and the respective outer arms 20, 24. In this way, the outer arms 20, 24 will bias the respective coreless roll 12 toward the central arm 22, in a manner that will be described in greater detail below.

One important advantage of the invention is that the coreless roll securing mechanism 18 is designed to prevent radial displacement of the coreless rolls 12 with respect to the frame 14 of the assembly 10 during use, so that a coreless roll can be dispensed without fear of radial displacement during use as confidently as a conventional cored roll of absorbent paper product can be. In the preferred embodiment, this is achieved by providing pressure plates 28 on inner surfaces 26 of the respective arms 20, 22, 24 of the securing mechanism 18. Advantageously, a number of projections 30, prefer-

ably but not necessarily more than one, extend inwardly from the respective pressure plates 28 toward where the coreless roll 12 of tissue will be held during operation. Projections 30 are specifically designed to penetrate the coreless roll between adjacent layers of the coreless roll to prevent radial displacement of the coreless roll during use. It will be appreciated that the biasing provided by the resiliency of arms 20, 24 will aid the projections 30 in penetrating between adjacent layers of the coreless roll and enhance the securement of the coreless rolls within the assembly 10 during use.

Pressure plates 28 are preferably mounted to rotate with respect to respective arms 20, 22, 24. This can be accomplished by means of a bearing pin 32, as is shown in FIGURE 1. Other well known mechanical arrangements could be provided to achieve this effect as well.

Preferably, assembly 10 includes a cover 34 that is hinged to frame 14 by a hinge 35, best seen in FIGURES 2 and 3. A sliding window 36 is provided in the cover 34 to selectively expose the roll 12 of coreless tissue that is being dispensed at a particular point in time, and to deny access to the other roll or vacated mounting location. Cover 34 and sliding window 36 are conventional.

One important aspect of the invention is that, in the embodiment of FIGURES 1-4, assembly 10 is provided with a temporary holding mechanism 38 for holding a coreless roll 12 in a position of alignment with respect to the securing mechanism 18, and specifically with respect to pressure plate 28, when the coreless roll 12 is being installed into the assembly 10. As may best be seen in FIGURES 2 and 3, temporary holding mechanism 38 preferably includes a platform 40 for supporting the coreless roll 12 that has an inner surface 42 that is curved to approximate the outer circumference of the roll 12. The roll 12 will be cradled relatively immovably in the inner surface 42 of platform 40 during installation of the roll 12 into the assembly 10. The platform 40 is configured to pivot with respect to frame 14 about a pivot point 44, best seen in FIGURES 2 and 3. A push rod 46 connects a lower portion of the platform 40 with a second portion 52 of a rocker arm 48, as shown in FIGURES 2 and 3. Rocker arm 48 is mounted to pivot with respect to frame 14 at a pivot point 54, and further includes a first portion 50 that is designed to contact a contact surface 60 on an inside surface of cover 34 when cover 34 is being closed, as may be seen in FIGURES 2 and 3. The first portion 50 of rocker arm 48 is biased with respect to frame 14 by means of a tension spring 56 that is mounted between first portion 50 and affixation point 58 on frame 14. This biasing urges rocker arm 48 to pivot in a counter clockwise direction about pivot point 54, and thus tends to urge platform 40 to the position shown in FIGURE 2, where it will contact the outer circumference of coreless roll 12 in a position of alignment with respect to the pressure plates 28 of the coreless roll securing mechanism 18. However, when cover 34 is closed, as may be seen by comparing

FIGURE 3 to FIGURE 2, the first portion 50 of rocker arm 48 will be urged in a clockwise direction about pivot point 54 by contact of first portion 50 with the contact surface 60 on cover 34. The entire rocker arm 48 will thus move in a clockwise direction, causing second portion 52 of rocker arm 48 and push rod 46 to rotate the platform 40 in a counter clockwise direction with respect to pivot point 44. This will tend to withdraw the platform 40 from its position contacting the coreless roll 12. Thus, when cover 34 is closed, the coreless roll 12 will be free to rotate without interference from the platform 40. The mechanism 62 that is used for latching the cover 34 in the closed position is shown in FIGURE 3.

Referring now to FIGURES 5-7, an assembly 64 for dispensing a coreless roll 12 of an absorbent consumer paper product such as toilet tissue includes, according to a second embodiment of the invention, a frame 66, which is embodied as a relatively simplified shield about the space where coreless roll 12 will be positioned during use. Frame 66 has a mounting hole 68 defined in a rear portion thereof for mounting the assembly 64 to a stationary surface, such as a wall. The assembly 64 further includes a coreless roll securing mechanism 78 that is embodied as a first arm 70 and a second arm 72, as may best be seen in FIGURE 5. A pair of pressure plates 76 are rotatively mounted to the respective arms 70, 72 and have projections 74 thereon that are constructed and arranged to penetrate into the coreless roll 12 between the adjacent layers of the coreless roll 12 in the manner described above with respect to the first described embodiment.

One advantageous feature in the embodiment of the invention that is depicted in FIGURES 5-7 is the provision of a retracting mechanism 80 for retracting one of the pressure plates 76 so that the pressure plates 76 can be moved apart during loading and unloading of the coreless roll 12 onto and out of the assembly 64. As may best be seen in FIGURE 7, one of the pressure plates 74 is preferably spring biased by means of compression spring 86 toward the oppositely facing pressure plate 76. A camming mechanism 84 is provided to retract the pressure plate 74 against the bias of spring 86. In the illustrated embodiment, camming mechanism 84 includes a knob 82 having a first cam surface 88, and a sleeve 85 having a second, opposed cam surface 90. When knob 82 is turned, as is shown diagrammatically in FIGURE 7, the interaction of cam surfaces 88, 90 will urge pressure plate 74 away from oppositely facing pressure plate against the bias of spring 86. Pressure plate 74 is rotatively mounted with respect to knob 82 by a pin 96 that is secured to pressure plate 74 and is free to rotate within the knob member 82. Pin 96 has a head 94 that is provided within a detent 92 in the knob 82, as is shown in FIGURE 7.

It is to be understood, however, that even though numerous characteristics and advantages of the present invention have been set forth in the foregoing description, together with details of the structure and function of the invention, the disclosure is illustrative

only, and changes may be made in detail, especially in matters of shape, size and arrangement of parts within the scope of the invention.

Claims

1. An assembly (10) for dispensing a coreless roll (12) of an absorbent consumer paper product such as toilet tissue, comprising:
 - a frame (14);
 - mounting means (16) for permitting the frame to be mounted to a stationary surface such as a wall; and
 - coreless roll securing means (18) for securing a coreless roll of an absorbent consumer paper product for rotation within the frame, said coreless roll securing means comprising at least one projection (30) that is constructed and arranged to penetrate into the coreless roll between adjacent layers of the coreless roll so as to prevent radial displacement of the coreless roll with respect to said frame during use.
2. An assembly according to claim 1, wherein said mounting means (16) comprises an opening defined in said frame for a securing member such as a bolt.
3. An assembly according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein said coreless roll securing means (18) further comprises a pair of opposed arms (20, 22; 24, 22) that are connected to said frame (14), and at least one projection (30) is mounted to an inner side of each of said arms that is constructed and arranged to penetrate into the coreless roll (12) between adjacent layers of the coreless roll so as to prevent radial displacement of the coreless roll with respect to said frame during use.
4. An assembly according to claim 3, further comprising biasing means for resiliently biasing at least one of said projections (30) toward said coreless roll.
5. An assembly according to claim 4, wherein said biasing means comprises at least one of said opposed arms (20, 24) being constructed out of a resilient material, and said at least one arm is configured so as to be slightly displaced when a coreless roll (12) is secured within said assembly.
6. An assembly according to claim 4, wherein said biasing means (86) is interposed between said at least one arm (72) and said projection (74).
7. An assembly according to any of claims 1 to 6, further comprising a pressure plate (28) that is mounted for rotation with respect to said frame (14),

and wherein said projection (30,74) extends from an inner surface of said pressure plate.

8. An assembly according to claim 3 or any of claims 4 to 7 when appendant to claim 3, further comprising a pair of pressure plates (28) that are mounted, respectively, for rotation with respect to said arms (20,22,24), and wherein said projections (30) extend, respectively, from respective inner surfaces of said pressure plates. 5
9. An assembly according to claim 7, wherein said pressure plate (28) has a plurality of said projections (30) provided thereon. 10
10. An assembly according to claim 8, wherein each of said pressure plates has a plurality of said projections provided thereon. 15
11. An assembly according to claim 8 or claim 10, further comprising biasing means (86) for biasing one of said pressure plates towards the coreless roll (12), and retracting means (80) for retracting the biased pressure plate against the biasing of said biasing means, whereby said pressure plates can be moved apart during loading and unloading of the coreless roll. 20
12. An assembly according to claim 11, wherein said retracting means comprises a knob (82) that is grippable by a person, and camming means (84) for retracting the pressure plate when said knob is turned. 25
13. An assembly according to claim 3 or any of claims 4 to 12 when appendant to claim 3, further comprising holding means (38) for holding a coreless roll (12) in a position of alignment with respect to said securing means (18) when the coreless roll is being installed into said assembly. 30
14. An assembly according to claim 13, wherein said holding means comprises a platform (40) for supporting the coreless roll. 35
15. An assembly according to claim 14, wherein said platform (40) is curved to approximate the outer circumference of the roll, whereby the roll is cradled relatively immovably in said platform. 40
16. An assembly according to any of claims 13 to 15, further comprising release means (46) for releasing said holding means (38) away from said coreless roll once the coreless roll has been installed. 45
17. An assembly according to claim 16, further comprising a closable cover, and wherein said release means (46) is constructed and arranged to release 50

said holding means away from said coreless roll upon closure of a cover (34).

18. A method of installing a coreless roll (12) of an absorbent consumer paper product in a dispenser, comprising steps of: 5
 - (a) orienting the coreless roll (12) to a desired position of alignment with the dispenser; and
 - (b) securing the coreless roll (12) to the dispenser by penetrating the coreless roll with at least one projection (30) that penetrates between adjacent layers of paper product in the coreless roll, whereby the coreless roll is secured against radial displacement with respect to the dispenser during operation. 10
19. A method according to claim 18, wherein step (a) comprises placing the coreless roll (12) in a temporary holding mechanism (38) and further comprising the additional step of withdrawing the temporary holding mechanism after step (b). 15
20. A method according to claim 18, wherein step (a) comprises holding the coreless roll (12) in the desired position by hand. 20
21. A method according to any of claims 18 to 20, wherein step (b) comprises penetrating the coreless roll with at least one projection (30) at each end of the coreless roll. 25
22. A method according to any of claims 18 to 21, wherein step (b) comprises penetrating the coreless roll with a plurality of projections (30). 30
23. A method according to any of claims 18 to 22, wherein step (b) comprises penetrating the coreless roll on both ends of the coreless roll (12) with a plurality of projections (30). 35
24. A method according to any of claims 18 to 23, further comprising the step of resiliently biasing the projection (30) into the coreless roll during operation. 40
25. A method of installing a coreless roll (12) of an absorbent consumer paper product on a dispenser (10), comprising steps of: 45
 - (a) placing the coreless roll (12) in the dispenser on a temporary holding mechanism (38) that will orient the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser;
 - (b) securing the coreless roll to the dispenser so that the coreless roll will be mounted to rotate with respect to the dispenser; and
 - (c) withdrawing the temporary holding mechanism (38) away from the coreless roll, whereby 50

the coreless roll will be permitted to rotate without being impeded by the temporary holding mechanism.

26. A method according to claim 25, wherein the dispenser has an outer cover (34), and step (c) is performed by closing the outer cover after the coreless roll has been installed in the dispenser. 5

27. An assembly for dispensing a coreless roll (12) of an absorbent consumer paper product, comprising: 10

temporary holding means (38) for orienting the coreless roll to a desired position of alignment within the dispenser; 15
securing means (18) for securing the coreless roll to the dispenser so that the coreless roll will be mounted to rotate with respect to the dispenser; and
release means (46) for withdrawing the temporary holding mechanism away from the coreless roll after the coreless roll has been secured by said securing means, whereby the coreless roll will be permitted to rotate without being impeded by the temporary holding mechanism. 20 25

28. An assembly according to claim 27, further comprising an outer cover (34) and wherein said release means is interlocked with said outer cover so that it will withdraw said temporary holding means (46) away from the coreless roll when said outer cover is closed. 30

29. An assembly according to claim 27 or claim 28, wherein said temporary holding means (38) comprises a platform (40) for supporting the coreless roll. 35

30. An assembly according to claim 29, wherein said platform (40) is curved to approximate the outer circumference of the roll, whereby the roll is cradled relatively immovably in said platform. 40

31. An assembly according to any of claims 27 to 30, wherein said securing means (18) further comprises a pair of opposed arms (20,22;24,22) and at least one projection (30) is mounted to an inner side of each of said arms that is constructed and arranged to penetrate into the coreless roll between adjacent layers of the coreless roll so as to prevent radial displacement of the coreless roll with respect to said frame during use. 45 50

32. An assembly according to claim 31, further comprising biasing means for resiliently biasing at least one of said projections (30) toward said coreless roll. 55

33. An assembly according to claim 32, wherein said biasing means comprises at least one of said opposed arms (20,24) being constructed out of a resilient material, and said at least one arm is configured so as to be slightly displaced when a coreless roll (12) is secured within said assembly.

34. An assembly according to any of claims 27 to 33, further comprising a pressure plate (28) that is mounted for rotation, and wherein said projection (30) extends from an inner surface of said pressure plate.

35. An assembly according to claim 34, wherein said pressure plate has a plurality of said projections (30) provided thereon.

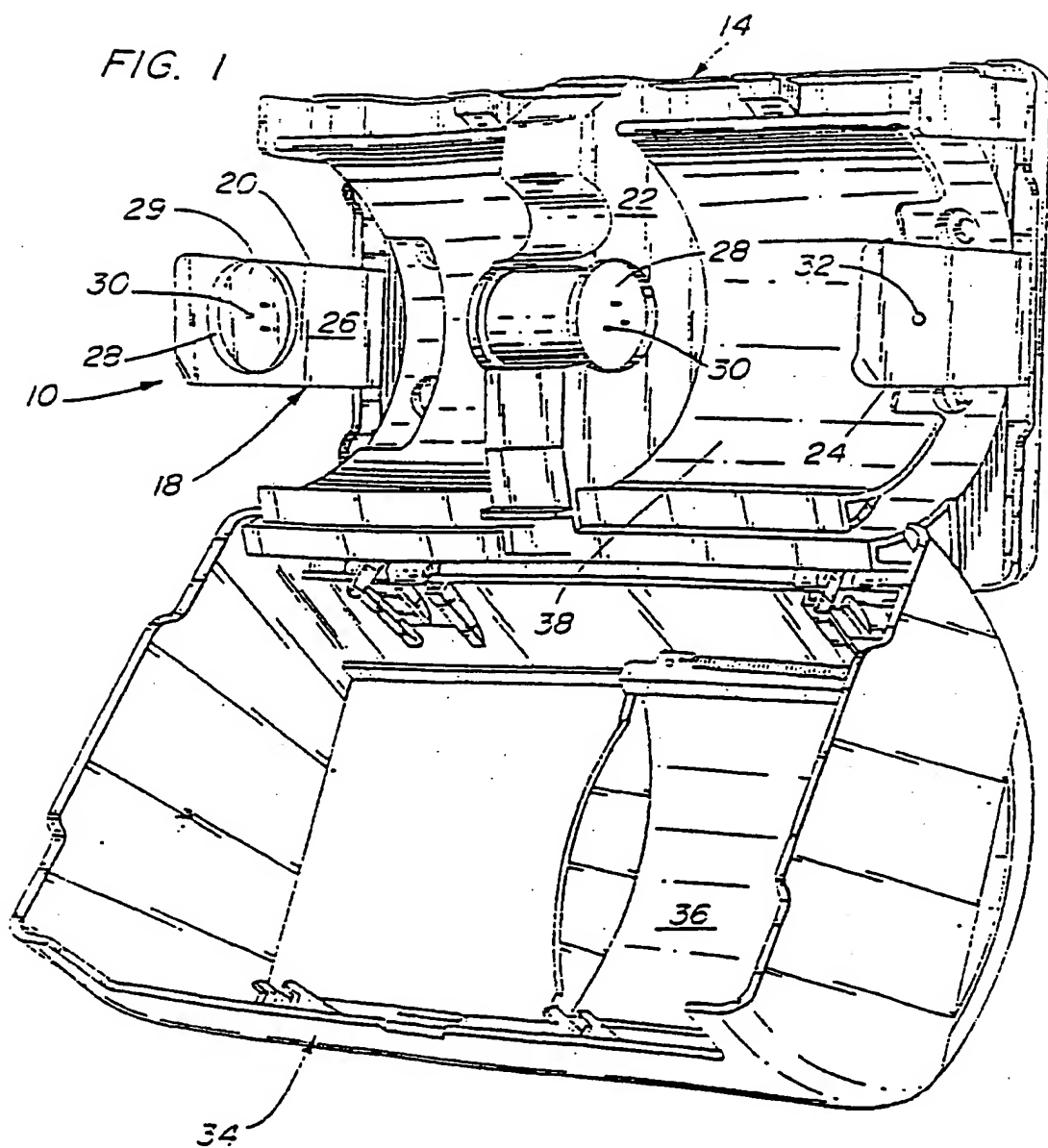


FIG. 2

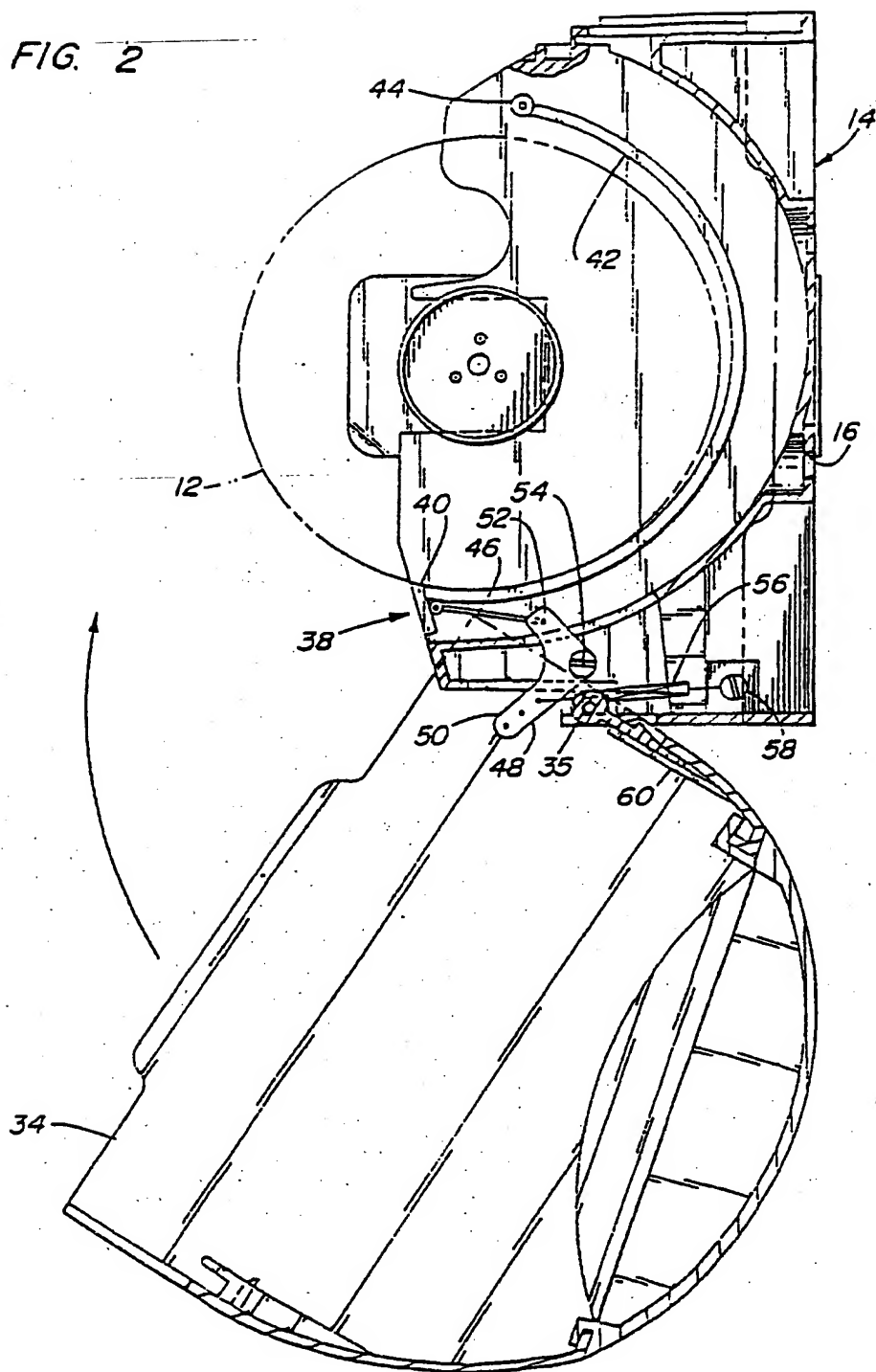


FIG. 3

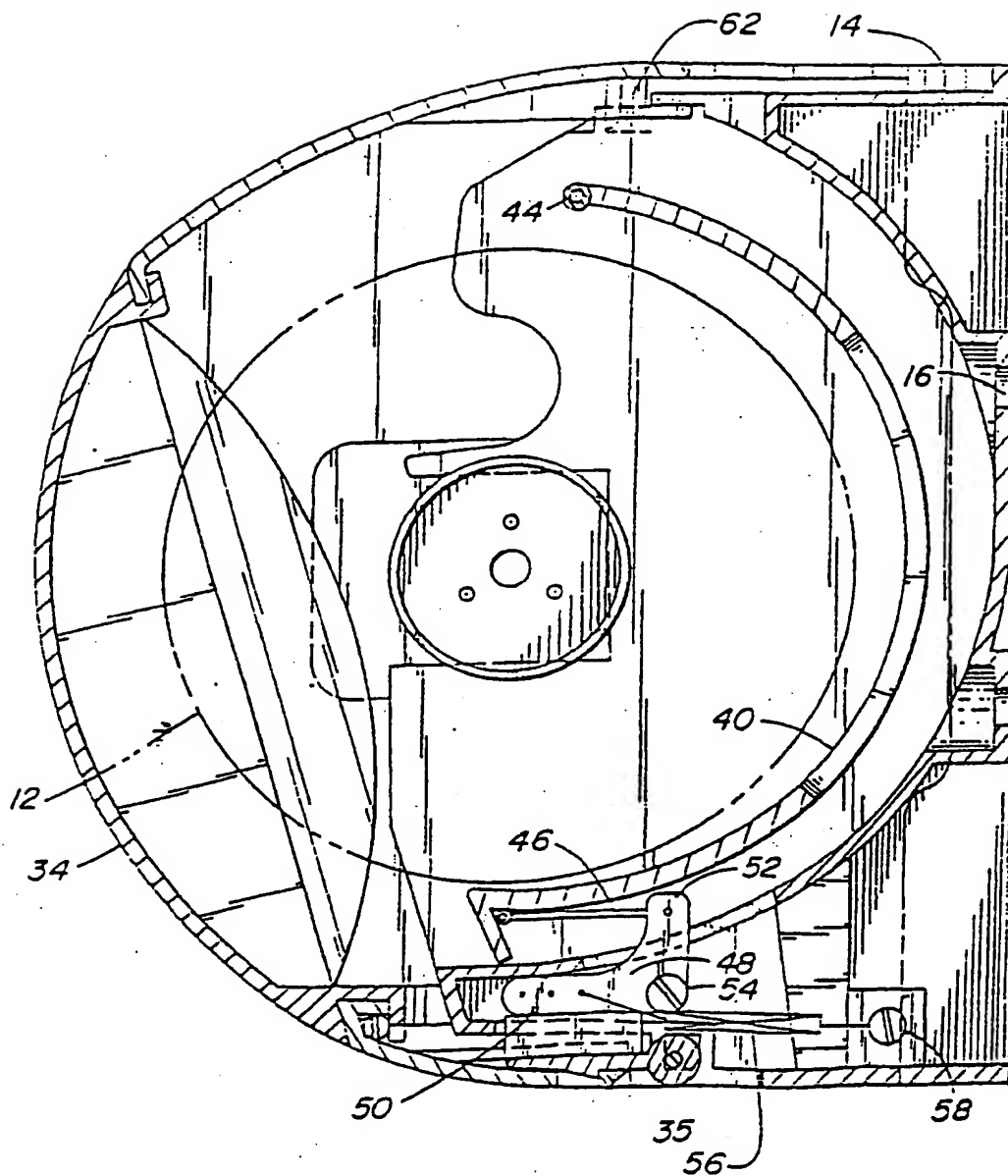


FIG. 4

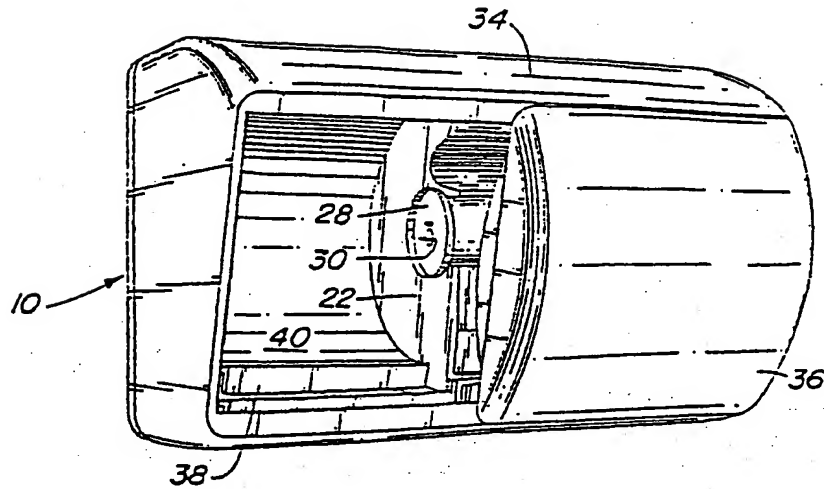


FIG. 5

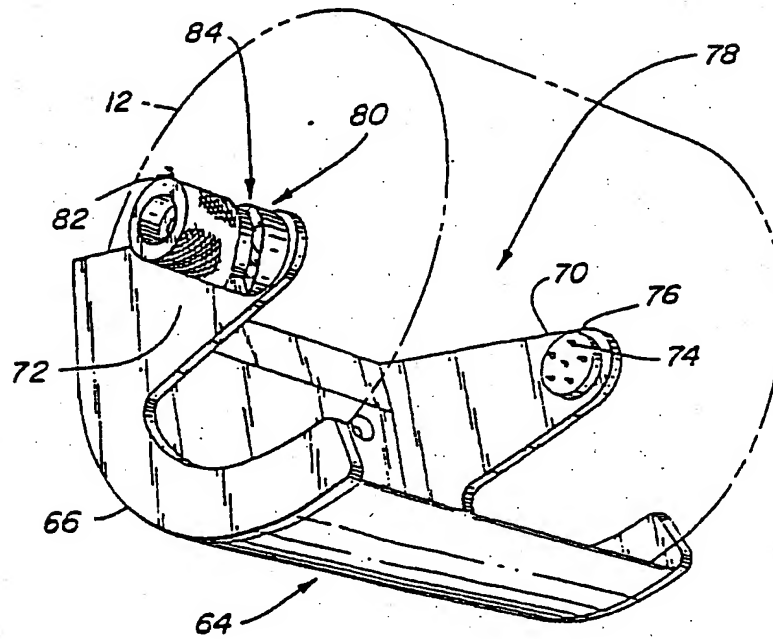


FIG. 6

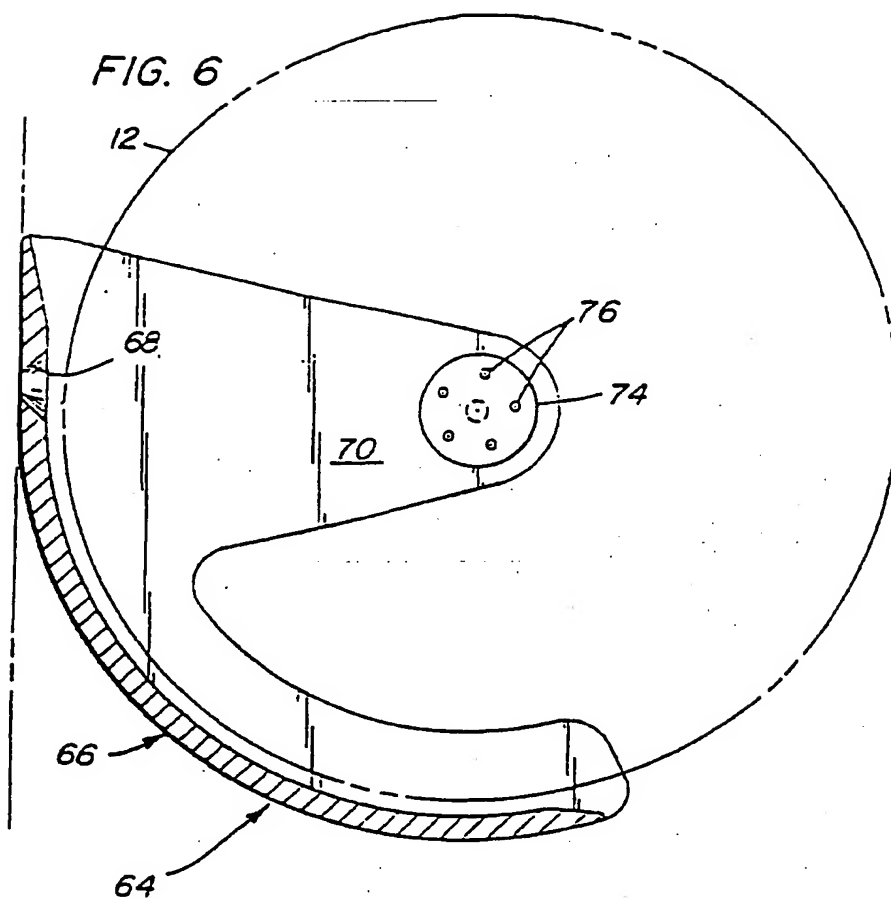
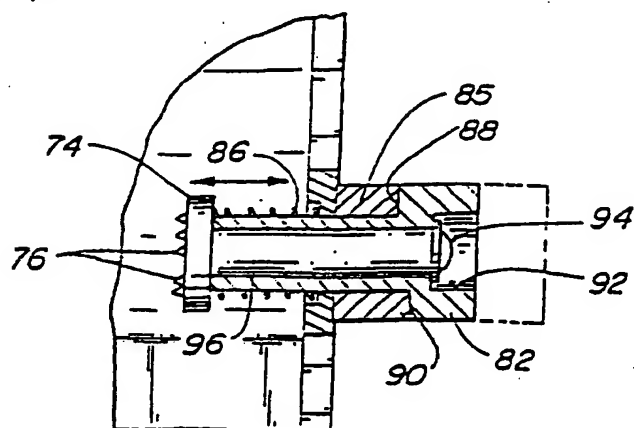


FIG. 7





European Patent
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EUROPEAN SEARCH REPORT

Application Number
EP 95 30 5262

DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT			
Category	Citation of document with indication, where appropriate, of relevant passages	Relevant to claim	CLASSIFICATION OF THE APPLICATION (Int.Cl.6)
X A	US-A-5 065 924 (GRANGER) * column 3, line 4-55; figures 1-3 *	18,20-24 1,2,4, 8-10	A47K10/40
A	--- US-A-3 032 283 (WOOSTER) * column 1, line 60 - column 2, line 67; figures 1-7 *	1-12	
A	--- US-A-5 314 131 (MC CANLESS) * column 4, line 41 - column 9, line 54; figures 1-10 *	13,19	
A	--- US-A-3 729 145 (KOO) * column 2, line 55 - column 8, line 54; figures 1-12 *	13,19	
A	--- US-A-5 370 339 (MOODY) -----		
<p>The present search report has been drawn up for all claims</p>			<p>TECHNICAL FIELDS SEARCHED (Int.Cl.6)</p> <p>A47K</p>
Place of search		Date of completion of the search	Examiner
THE HAGUE		26 March 1996	Kergueno, J
CATEGORY OF CITED DOCUMENTS			
<p>X : particularly relevant if taken alone Y : particularly relevant if combined with another document of the same category A : technological background O : non-written disclosure P : intermediate document</p>		<p>I : theory or principle underlying the invention E : earlier patent document, but published on, or after the filing date D : document cited in the application L : document cited for other reasons ----- & : member of the same patent family, corresponding document</p>	

EPO FORM 1503 (01.92) (P4/C4)



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CLAIMS INCURRING FEES

The present European patent application comprised at the time of filing more than ten claims.

- ☐ All claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims and for those claims for which claims fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☐ No claims fees have been paid within the prescribed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for the first ten claims.

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions,

namely:

See sheet -B-

- ☐ All further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for all claims.
- ☐ Only part of the further search fees have been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the inventions in respect of which search fees have been paid, namely claims:
- ☒ None of the further search fees has been paid within the fixed time limit. The present European search report has been drawn up for those parts of the European patent application which relate to the invention first mentioned in the claims,

namely claims: 1-24



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EP 95 30 5262 -B-

LACK OF UNITY OF INVENTION

The Search Division considers that the present European patent application does not comply with the requirement of unity of invention and relates to several inventions or groups of inventions, namely:

1. Claims 1-24 : An assembly and method for dispensing a coreless roll, including a projection to penetrate the roll.
2. Claims 25-35 : A method of installing, and an assembly for dispensing, a coreless roll, including a temporary holding mechanism for the roll.